



## Guidance

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## Healthy living blueprint for schools

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## Healthy living blueprint for schools

Produced by the DfES with the support of:



## Foreword

I know that headteachers, governors and teachers share my view that the well-being of children and young people is of the utmost importance. You will also share my concern about the rise in childhood obesity, and other challenges to health.

Changing patterns of eating, playing, working, travel and leisure activities have together led to an unhealthy lifestyle for some children that continues into adolescence and adulthood.

I have recently published my Department's *Five Year Strategy for Children and Learners*, setting out a vision of education and skills for the future. Part of this vision is for all schools to become healthy schools. This 'blueprint' is designed to support schools in becoming healthier and together with the new healthy living web portal offers information, advice, guidance and sources of help.

I am delighted that my ministerial colleagues responsible for health, sport and the environment, food and rural affairs together with the Food Standards Agency are all behind this drive to get young people switched on to a healthy lifestyle. We believe that good health and effective learning go hand in hand, and habits started young are more likely to continue throughout adult life.

The Government will soon also be publishing a White Paper on improving health, following substantial consultation over the last few months. The White Paper will set the strategic direction for a range of cross-Government initiatives on improving health, including school-based initiatives.

We have set ourselves an ambitious target to tackle childhood obesity which healthy schools can help achieve. This is a challenge to all of us – the education system, together with parents, carers, the NHS, the food industry and other stakeholders. It is a challenge we cannot ignore. The consequences of failure are serious – for the individual and for society.

The partnership of home and school is critical in shaping how children and young people behave, particularly where health is concerned. Each must reinforce the other. This is not always easy, of course, but schools are well placed to lead by example. Through the Curriculum, the school ethos and through leadership, headteachers, senior managers, teachers and support staff can bring together all the elements of the school day to create an environment which supports a healthy lifestyle.

Central to our vision is the National Healthy School Programme which has already achieved much in bringing together schools and their local communities so that children, young people and their families work together towards a healthy school.

Of course schools have different starting points, and the aim of this 'blueprint' is to offer options and ideas on how your school, or early years setting might develop. The 'blueprint' and supporting web portal offer resources and guidance on teaching and learning, including cooking; suggests ways of helping pupils understand where food comes from and how it is produced; promotes physical activity and sport; and offers help with the physical environment, both indoors and out. We draw in many other facets that have an impact on good health and well-being.

We have included a separate section on early years settings. Many of the principles described in the schools section of the 'blueprint' apply equally to the early years.

I am pleased to launch alongside this 'blueprint' a new web portal [www.teachernet.gov.uk/healthyliving](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/healthyliving) which brings together a wide range of helpful resources for schools. I hope it will become part of your everyday resource, and that you, your pupils and their families will work together to make your school a healthy school.



Charles Clarke, *Secretary of State for Education and Skills*

## Introduction

For many years we have all enjoyed improving levels of education and health. But there is mounting evidence that poor diet and declining levels of activity could jeopardise the chances for our children to lead long, full and active lives. We believe that there is growing support for measures that will encourage children and adults to make healthier life choices. Schools can provide children with skills they need to be confident about leading a healthy lifestyle.

### The role of schools

We want schools to play a more active part in shaping attitudes to health including food, sport and physical activity, through the Curriculum and wider school environment. They can encourage children to make informed choices by offering healthy food and drink options that reflect what is taught in the classroom. Schools can provide many opportunities to be active, and offer access to health support services. There is good evidence that a multi-faceted approach, touching many different aspects of school life, is likely to be the most effective. This might include opportunities for physical activity, for cooking and growing fruit and vegetables, an assessment of how and what children eat and drink, and offering access to health support services.

The **National Healthy School Programme** (a joint DfES/DH programme) is working with over 10,000 schools to develop a whole school approach to health, for example one that focuses on both the organisation and taught curriculum. It brings together and promotes all aspects of health, whilst giving schools flexibility to focus on particular local issues. Every area has a local healthy schools programme, which is managed by local education and health partnerships, and is able to support schools in meeting the objectives of this 'blueprint'.

We have five key objectives, and our aim is that – over time – all schools will make progress in each objective:

- 1 To promote a school ethos and environment which encourages a healthy lifestyle
- 2 To use the full capacity and flexibility of the Curriculum to achieve a healthy lifestyle
- 3 To ensure the food and drink available across the school day reinforces the healthy lifestyle message
- 4 To provide high quality Physical Education and School Sport and promote Physical Activity as part of a lifelong healthy lifestyle
- 5 To promote an understanding of the full range of issues and behaviours which impact upon lifelong health

We want schools to consider the extent to which their current practice reflects these objectives and to look for opportunities to improve health throughout every area of school life, drawing on the wide range of support available. The new web portal [www.teachernet.gov.uk/healthyliving](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/healthyliving) provides a guide under each objective of where additional support and information can be obtained.



## Our commitments

We recognise that Government also has an important role to play in giving schools new support and providing extra resources to help them in their efforts to create a healthy environment. We will provide additional funding to enable progress to be made.

A key area for improvement is school food which should reinforce healthy eating messages from the classroom. Food eaten at school provides a significant proportion of children's nutrient intake and can encourage pupils to eat more fruit and vegetables and develop a taste for food low in salt, sugar and fat. Much more needs to be done to improve the quality of food that schools provide and also to influence the choices that pupils make. The school meals contract is often the largest financial decision that headteachers and governors make and they are likely to get best value for money if they use techniques and language which is familiar to the catering industry. There is good evidence that pupils in schools with well-trained catering staff eat healthier food, but there is very little training available for catering staff.

To support schools to make progress in these key areas we will:

- **revise secondary school nutritional standards** to take account of recent advice on consumption of salt, saturated fats, and fruit and vegetable. We will urgently review primary school standards to assess whether they too need revision and action accordingly
- **provide additional support for headteachers and governors** in assessing the best way to provide a meals service, specify and tender contracts and monitor them – working with schools and the industry to produce web-based guidance which sets out the practical steps that need to be taken when drawing up and monitoring contracts
- **work with the industry and sector skills bodies** to provide better training and support for catering staff working with schools.

We will also develop a programme of action to make progress on our aspiration that **every school will become a healthy school**, providing practical advice and guidance through the National Healthy School Programme. We want to make significant progress within the next five years towards achieving this.

In addition, we will continue to invest significantly in developing PE and school sport (over £1 billion is being invested by the Government).

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## To promote a school ethos and environment which encourages a healthy lifestyle

### Objective 1

The ethos and environment of a school sets the tone for the behaviour and attitudes expected of both staff and pupils. For example, evidence from the Health Development Agency (HDA) and the Food Standards Agency (FSA) has indicated that schools effecting changes in pupils' eating habits employed a range of strategies to develop positive attitudes to diet and nutrition. These usually include:

- strong leadership and management
- careful curriculum planning and resourcing, often drawing in help from external agencies
- a sympathetic physical environment, including school grounds
- a well-developed voice for all children
- good quality professional development for teachers
- close links with parents and local communities and
- careful recording and acknowledgement of pupils' achievements.

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We want schools to give pupils **consistent messages** about all aspects of health through a 'whole school approach', help them understand the impact of particular behaviours and encourage them to **take responsibility** for the choices they make.

School nurses and other health promotion staff can help to achieve a whole school approach. Their support can be obtained through the local Primary Care Trust (PCT). In order to increase school nursing support to schools, the Chief Nursing Officer recommends that PCTs, children's trusts, and local authorities work towards having a minimum of one full-time, whole year, qualified school nurse for each cluster or group of primary schools and its secondary school taking account of health needs and school populations.

The Millennium Primary School in Greenwich, London was designed as a school and community centre. Before and after school care is available for children under eight, where breakfast and tea are provided, and a variety of after school clubs for children are on offer. A full range of primary care services and welfare services are also offered for the wider community through the health centre next door.

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## To use the full capacity and flexibility of the Curriculum to achieve a healthy lifestyle

### Objective 2

Children's entitlement to free early education from the term following their third birthday ensures very young children are introduced to the benefits of being healthy and active. The **Foundation Stage** curriculum for 3-5 year olds, the first stage of the National Curriculum, promotes children's social and emotional well-being as well as their physical well-being. **Personal, Social and Emotional Development** is one of the six areas of learning where self-esteem, motivation and good social behaviour is promoted. **Physical Development** is another area of learning where children are not only helped to understand the benefits of exercise but also to understand the benefits of a healthy diet, sleep and personal hygiene.

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**Key Stage 1 and beyond** builds on children's experiences during the early years. There are a number of opportunities for pupils to develop knowledge and understanding of health, including healthy eating patterns and practical skills that are needed to understand where food comes from, shop, prepare food and cook. **Integrated curriculum planning** is essential so that teachers can plan how and what children will learn in different subjects and at different phases, to secure consistency and progression.

- **Food Technology**, as part of Design and Technology, is compulsory at primary level and is offered by nearly 90% of schools at secondary level. It provides the opportunity to learn about where food comes from and apply healthy eating messages through practical work with food including preparation and cooking. The Food in Schools Programme is raising the profile of cooking in schools through Food Partnerships. Primary teachers benefit from the specialist expertise of their secondary colleagues who train them to teach **cooking** and support them to work towards the National Healthy School Standard.
- **Science** provides an opportunity to learn about the types of food available, their nutritional composition, digestion and the function of different nutrients in contributing to health and how the body responds to exercise.
- **Personal, Social and Health Education** encourages young people to take responsibility for their own health and well-being, teaches them how to develop a healthy lifestyle and addresses issues such as body image.

- **Geography** provides a focus on the natural world and changing environment through field work, and the opportunity to consider the impact our consumer choices have on people across the world who rely on growing food as their source of income.
- **Citizenship** offers the chance to debate controversial issues of interest to young people, for example, advertising and sustainable development.
- **Physical Education** provides pupils with the opportunity to develop physically and to understand the practical impact of sport, exercise and other physical activity such as dance and walking (see objective 4 relating to physical activity).
- **School educational visits** can include opportunities for pupils to learn about healthy behaviour, for example, during residential trips to outdoor activity centres.

There are also opportunities within other subjects such as **Maths**, for example, to understand nutrition labelling, calculating quantities for recipes, weighing and measuring ingredients. **Religious Education** could provide pupils with the chance to discuss the role of foods in the major religions of the world. **History** can provide insights into changes to our ancestors' diets and how some now familiar foods were introduced to this country.

Teachers will be familiar with the QCA schemes of work which can help with medium and long-term planning in implementation of the National Curriculum programmes of study.

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We are continuing to ensure that teachers' professional development is met in a range of subjects across the Curriculum.

We want schools – particularly extended schools – to use **extra-curricular activities** such as breakfast, cooking, sports, gardening and after-school clubs to offer wider opportunities to learn about food, where it comes from and how to prepare it. We are encouraging schools to make better use of their own environments as places to learn about food and tap into the many local resources in their area such as allotments, farms and environmental centres. The DfES **Growing Schools Programme** offers schools a comprehensive directory of information on food, farming and the countryside, including the many organisations, bodies, programmes and initiatives.

Turner's Hill Primary School in West Sussex, as part of the Growing Schools Programme, developed its school grounds to create an 'outside classroom' to enhance and complement the work undertaken in the 'inside classroom'.

To ensure the food and drink available across the school day reinforces the healthy lifestyle message

### Objective 3

We want schools to think carefully about the food offered during the school day – before school, at break and lunch time and after school – and ensure it reflects the healthy eating messages taught in the Curriculum. We want schools to promote and facilitate healthy eating and drinking – to help decrease the amount of fat, salt and sugar consumed and increase intake of fruit and vegetables.

The first step for a school should be to develop, write and implement a Whole School Food Policy to promote healthier eating. The School Council can be used to consult on a food policy. The local Healthy School co-ordinator has the expertise to help schools develop this in a meaningful way that will have optimum impact in the school and its wider community.

The learning from the eight Food in Schools pilot projects will provide guidance and 'good practice' to support schools in developing and implementing a whole school food policy. The results of the pilots, undertaken in over 300 schools, will be available from early 2005 and will include information on: healthier breakfast clubs; healthier tuck shops; healthier vending machines; healthier lunch boxes; healthier cookery clubs; healthier growing clubs; improving water provision; and improving the dining room environment.

find out more at [www.teachernet.gov.uk/healthyliving](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/healthyliving)

Promotion of food and drink high in fat, salt and/or sugar can negatively influence children's food choices and lead to an unhealthy diet. A challenge for schools is to balance the benefits of food promotional activity including sponsorship, advertising and branding of materials, with the ethos of the healthy school and the whole school approach to healthy eating. For example, the Yorkshire Water Cool Schools initiative can help schools address the importance of drinking water. The Food Standards Agency advises that schools should not accept vending machines with branding associated with those foods, meals or snacks high in fat, sugar or salt. Wider issues concerning food promotion to children and sponsorship is one of the issues raised in the Choosing Health? consultation, which will be included in the White Paper on improving health in the autumn.

We want schools to promote the '**5 A DAY**' message, encouraging all children to eat at least five portions of fruit and vegetables a day and where appropriate, join the **School Fruit and Vegetable Scheme**. By the end of 2004, all 4-6 year olds in LEA maintained infant, primary and special schools will be eligible for a free piece of fruit or vegetable every school day.

Schools providing **breakfast** should ensure that the food and drink available are consistent with an overall healthy diet. Many pupils do not eat breakfast before coming to school and this affects the balance and variety of a child's overall daily diet. It may also impact on their ability to settle in the mornings and begin to learn. Combining a breakfast service offering healthy food with other activities may help attendance, offer the opportunity for some catch-up work and some personal support for individuals who may need it.

St Edmund's Family Breakfast Club in King's Lynn, for example, offers parents and children from 20 families the opportunity to experience a range of practical and fun activities together.

Children need energy to get through the school day and break time snacks can provide some of that energy. A policy on food consumed at break time (or only selling healthy food) can help cut the levels of fat, sugar and salt that children consume and boost their intake of fruit and vegetables.

**Tuck shops and vending machines** often add to the food choices available for pupils. Many schools now have unbranded vending machines offering healthier options such as natural fruit juices, dried fruit, bread rolls, fresh fruit and vegetables. Dene Magna School in Gloucestershire operates a green vending machine which has replaced fizzy drinks with juice.

**School lunches** are a key area for improvement as they reinforce healthy eating messages from the classroom. They provide a significant proportion of children's food and nutrient intake – over 30% on average – and can encourage pupils to eat more fruit and vegetables and develop a taste for food low in salt, sugar and fat.

A carefully specified and monitored catering contract, ensuring that healthy meals are cooked from high quality ingredients, is essential, with schools considering whether contracted or in-house provision is best, and the scope for using locally sourced ingredients. Schools could consider how take up of healthier options can be increased – through presentation of food available, with healthier options made more visible and a pricing structure geared towards encouraging healthier choices. Cashless payment systems can allow parents and schools to monitor food choices, or for pupils to collect rewards for making healthy food choices.

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Many parents opt for their children to take a **packed lunch** to school. The FSA has found that packed lunches may contain high levels of salt, fat and sugar. Schools can seek to influence the content of packed lunches and make advice to parents available. It is important to engage with parents/carers about the benefits and practicalities of providing a healthier packed lunch.

Trained catering managers understand the need for, and the practical implementation of, healthier catering practices. **Managing the lunch hour** and **good quality canteen facilities** are both crucial in persuading pupils to eat in school and behave well. The dining room environment should be attractive to children and staff – a place they want to go and eat in, with sufficient time allocated to the lunch period. Many schools have queuing problems, insufficient seating and do not allow adequate time for children to participate in lunchtime activities and eat lunch. Some schools have tackled these problems by reorganising their lunch hour, and making cosmetic improvements to their dining facilities, usually with advice from the School Council. We hope that many more will take a close look at changing their arrangements to provide a better lunchtime experience for all pupils. The outputs from the Food in Schools Dining Room Environment pilot, available early 2005, will provide support to schools in making improvements to their dining rooms. In the long term, the Building Schools of the Future Programme will provide all secondary schools with modern eating facilities.

All pupils should have access to **drinking water** at all times at a number of points around the school, preferably not from taps in the toilets. Pupils should be permitted to carry water with them and consumption encouraged both in class and during break and lunch time.

## To provide high quality Physical Education and School Sport and promote Physical Activity as part of a lifelong healthy lifestyle

### Objective 4

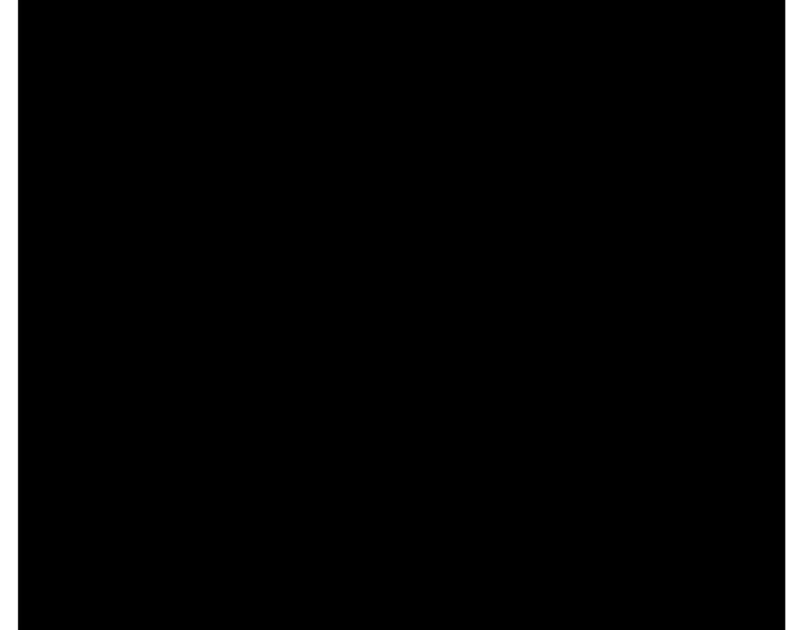
Physical development is one of the six areas of learning within the Foundation Stage Curriculum for 3-5 year olds. Children are encouraged to learn through structured and unstructured play and enjoy indoor and outdoor activities. Children also gain confidence in what they can do and are helped understand the benefits of a healthy diet and being active. During 2003-04, the Sure Start Unit funded 'Learning Through Landscapes', to develop and produce resources for practitioners aimed at improving outdoor play provision in the early years.

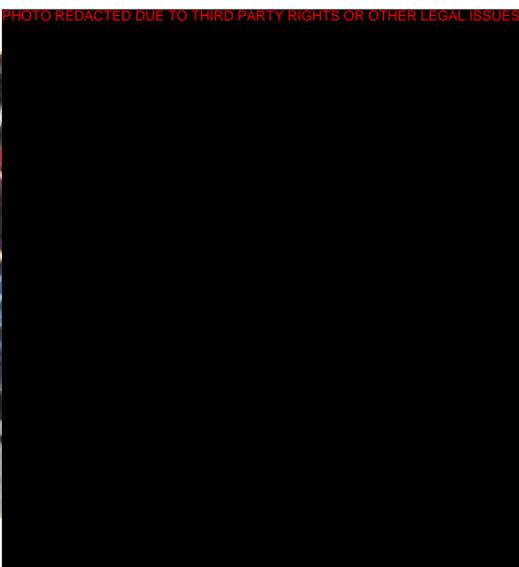
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All children must be taught PE from age 5-16. We want children to have access to at least **two hours of high quality PE and school sport** every week. We are firmly in favour of competitive sport. It teaches teamwork, discipline, self-respect and how to cope with winning and losing.

We want children to have a range of exciting and innovative choices – recognising that the traditional sports are not likely to appeal to all young people. We want to encourage those young people who tend not to enjoy sport to try other non-competitive forms of physical activity like dance, which can contribute to good health and well-being. We want children's PE experience within the Curriculum to link to **opportunities in local clubs**, so that they can pursue their interests outside school hours and continue when they have completed their education. The national sports strategy funds the release of teachers from schools to give them time to run and co-ordinate out-of-hours activities. But extra-curricular activities do not have to be run by teachers. Our strategy also brings more coaches and volunteers into schools.

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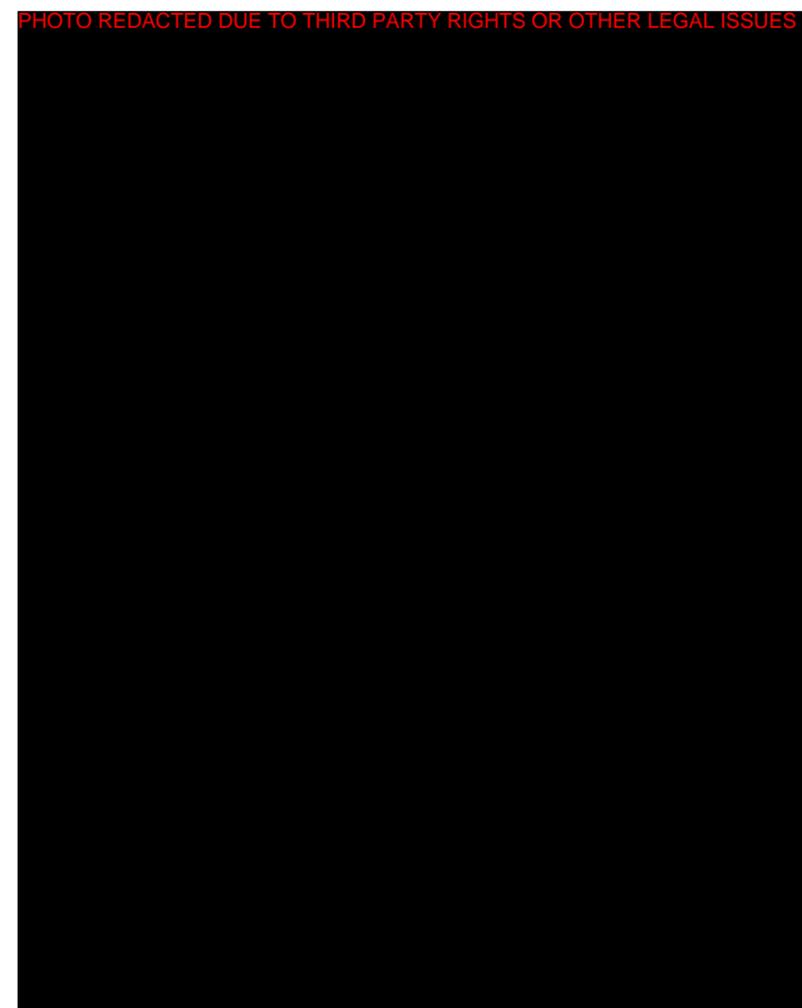
Through extended schools, after-school activities can be provided on a school site to pupils, young people and the wider community. Brookfield High School and Sports College in Knowsley, in partnership with the National Coaching Foundation and Knowsley Leisure Services, offers a whole range of courses for the local community. These include a Parents in Sport project and family learning and sports nights, offering a variety of activities for the whole family. Facilities are available to the whole community each evening and at weekends.

We want PE and sport facilities, particularly changing and washing facilities that are safe, attractive and designed with cultural and body image sensitivities in mind; and to promote a positive attitude to **personal hygiene**. This will be an important part of designing PE facilities as part of the Building Schools for the Future Programme.

Children's experiences in school should **lay the foundation** for an active adult lifestyle – whether playing competitive sport professionally, for recreation, taking part regularly in healthy activities like dance or simply understanding the fundamental importance of exercise as a key determinant of longer term health and weight control.

We want schools to take every opportunity to ensure that pupils are physically active, through a stimulating **playground environment** and wider outdoor activities. Some schools have playground supervisors/teaching assistants who are trained to lead active play, including traditional games. There are also examples of play/sports equipment being made available to children during break times in order that they can develop their skills.

Children should be encouraged to **walk** or **cycle** part or all of the way to school wherever this is safe and practical. We expect schools to work with their local authority school travel advisers, and put in place **school travel plans** that will identify things that schools, pupils, parents, highways and local education authorities can do to reduce car use on the school run – cycle and pedestrian training, secure cycle storage, improved road crossings and cycle paths, traffic calming, 'park and stride' facilities, for example. Hillside Primary School in Norfolk has increased the number of pupils cycling to schools by offering cycle training and installing a bike shed.



To promote an understanding of the full range of issues and behaviours which impact upon lifelong health



## Objective 5

In supporting a healthy lifestyle, it is important that schools do not omit other areas such as emotional well-being, attitudes to drugs, alcohol, tobacco and sexual health as these are all important elements.

We want children to have a coherent high quality Personal, Social and Health Education programme which gives them all the opportunity to explore the full range of issues in a safe environment.

Effective Sex and Relationship Education (SRE) can reduce the instances of teenage pregnancy and promote sexual health thereby reducing sexually transmitted infections. This can be supported not only by the Curriculum but by provision of health advice services. The involvement of parents in the development of a school SRE policy promotes partnership and understanding of the issues.

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Effective drug, alcohol and tobacco education can reduce or delay the take-up of some or all of these substances. The involvement of parents in the development of a school drug policy promotes partnership and understanding of the issues and supports the management of a consistent preventative approach to drug related issues.

Peer mentoring, peer support and other support structures, together with anti-bullying strategies, can help promote positive health, including **mental health**. Making opportunities for pupils' views to be heard and acted on promotes pupil well-being. Local Connexions services also work with schools to ensure support and advice for 13-19 year olds.

**Extended Schools** in partnership with the PCT can provide health and social care services on the school site. This might include drop-in health clinics and sexual health advisory services as well as specialist care like drug and alcohol advisory services and counselling.

The **National Healthy School Programme** has been designed to support schools in strengthening their provision by involving the whole school community in health issues. Such an approach is more likely to have a greater impact on pupils' health, learning opportunities and achievement.

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We want to see early years and childcare workers planning and organising an appropriate learning environment for children to give them rich and stimulating experiences, including making healthy lifestyle choices. *Birth to Five* published by the NHS is a practical guide for parents on all aspects of child health.

In the early years, **teaching and learning styles** appropriate to young children must be used and there may be a strong practical emphasis. Children might be asked to name a range of different foods and express likes and dislikes. Activities to encourage healthy eating might include story telling and games, using displays, theme days and other techniques to increase interest. Carers can use interventions to encourage consumption of nutritious food, such as 'Story Snacks' – motivating children to try new fruit and vegetables by preparing snacks in a creative way and describing how the food helps the body etc.

Children may be in settings for the entire working day and may eat two main meals as well as two or more snacks. In these cases the day care provider will provide most of the **food a child consumes**, making healthy eating a higher priority. Day care providers may be able to join the Healthy Start Scheme which will be phased in during 2005 and will, by the end of 2005, offer nurseries reimbursement for providing milk or fruit. The detailed operational plans for this new Scheme, which will replace the current Welfare Food Scheme, are being developed. In the meantime, the Government response to the Healthy Start consultation (published 16 February 2004) gives information about the nature of Healthy Start, including information about plans for reimbursing provision of milk and fruit by nurseries.

It is important that early years settings promote diversity in food and dietary recommendations and are sensitive to the cultural needs of their communities.

Early years settings can also contribute to healthy living through physical activity, including structured and unstructured indoor and outdoor play.

There is a requirement in the national standards for early years settings to provide stimulating play opportunities for young children.

Health and learning, particularly in the early years of life, are interlinked. Many of the activities to support children's learning will involve play and these in turn will promote healthy development of large motor skills (co-ordination, balance movement, etc).

Facilitated activities for the early years age group may include:

- toddler gyms/tumble tots
- supervised play
- learning through play.

## Early years

In 2001 the Government introduced national standards for under fives day care to ensure a consistent approach to the regulation of day care in England. The standards state that 'day care providers must ensure that children are provided with regular drinks and food in adequate quantities for their needs and that this is properly prepared, nutritious and complies with dietary and religious requirements'. The supporting criteria emphasise that:

- fresh drinking water should be available to children at all times
- children who stay in day care for the whole day are offered a midday meal and other healthy snacks and drinks routinely
- the provider requests information from parents about any special dietary requirements, preferences or food allergies the child may have and
- if parents provide packed lunches, they are informed of what can be stored away safely.

The *Birth to Three Matters Framework* (ages 0-3) and the *Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage* (ages 3-5) are both clear that healthy eating is important for young children.

